

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT General Conditions in the Wonsan Area

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1. Most of the North Korean public place the blame for the situation of North Korea on KIM Il-sung and believe that the USSR is using Korea and KIM as tools to further Soviet development and will throw them to the wolves if the international situation requires it. This attitude is reflected in the officials of small towns, who take no action against persons known to sympathize with the UN cause. Even in the larger cities the case is the same.
2. At a Communist meeting of village leaders in the Wonsan area, speakers stated that the North Koreans could expect no supplies from the USSR and would have to contain American and UN forces in Korea while the USSR prepared for a liberation blow to be struck in the west. Korea, they said, would be liberated when the world was liberated by the victorious Soviet army.
3. There are persistent rumors that KIM Il-sung is not in Korea but has moved either to Antung or to Mukden. There are no radios or newspapers in the Wonsan area to inform civilians of the war news, but they have devised a method of ascertaining the progress of the war: when a new Communist propaganda leaflet is issued claiming that Communist forces have made a gain of twenty miles to the south, the people assume that there has been a gain of twenty miles, but by the UN.
4. Desertion among North Korean troops is common. Deserters flee to the mountains and some join guerrilla units working for the UN forces. In order to avoid being shot at sight, deserters approaching the guerrillas first throw away their weapons. Many North Korean troops carry Republic of Korea flags and are constantly questioning villagers about how far away the UN lines are. None of the troops in the Wonsan area appeared to have any knowledge of how the war was going.
5. Chinese Communist troops in the area are all dirty and have lice. Their outer garments are good protection against the cold, and there appeared to be few instances of frostbite, although the North Korean troops suffered heavily from this difficulty. About 30 percent of the Chinese have either typhus or smallpox, and many have both. No anti-disease program has been introduced, and only officers are placed in hospitals. The doctors have no serum and administer only penicillin to treat both diseases.

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6. Some of the Chinese soldiers stated they had no will to fight but had no choice, for they would be killed by their own forces if they mentioned withdrawal. The soldiers are very bitter about the promises made them by their officers before they entered Korea, such as good food, clothing, and better weapons. Before leaving China, they had been told that if captured they were to state that they were volunteers. The North Koreans, moreover, do not accept the Chinese as their saviors but avoid contacts with them and are angry when food and clothing are requisitioned to help the Chinese.
7. Chinese soldiers have been observed to dig into the ground and stay there, receiving their food from a runner with a shoulder pole and two buckets. Most of the Chinese carry two grenades in their sleeves.
8. Trucks seen in the Wonsan area are about half American made and half Soviet made. All are in poor running order because of lack of maintenance. Some American-made two-and-a-half trucks have been repainted but still carry Chinese characters showing them to be the property of a coal mine in Manchuria.
9. Fuel is very short in the area and everything possible is being used for firewood. The military personnel have been chopping down telegraph poles to burn, and coal for the railroad is becoming short. A North Korean officer was making a survey of the Kojo coal mine in early March.
10. Both North and South Korean won are current in the area. Little can be purchased for money, however, since most of the items needed for existence, such as food and clothing, are hidden from the troops. Anything that the troops can use they take from the civilian populace. Rice taxes were to be collected, but the appearance of UN ships in Wonsan harbor stopped the collection.
11. When the North Koreans were certain of a victory in the south, they collected all citizenship cards in anticipation of issuing a new type of pass. This has not been done, however. In order to travel even a few miles, a pass must be obtained from the police, and even short journeys are discouraged.
12. The railroad is running between Wonsan and Pyongyang and Kowon. Rails from the double track have been used by the military to maintain a single line. Only two steam engines have been seen in the Wonsan area.

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